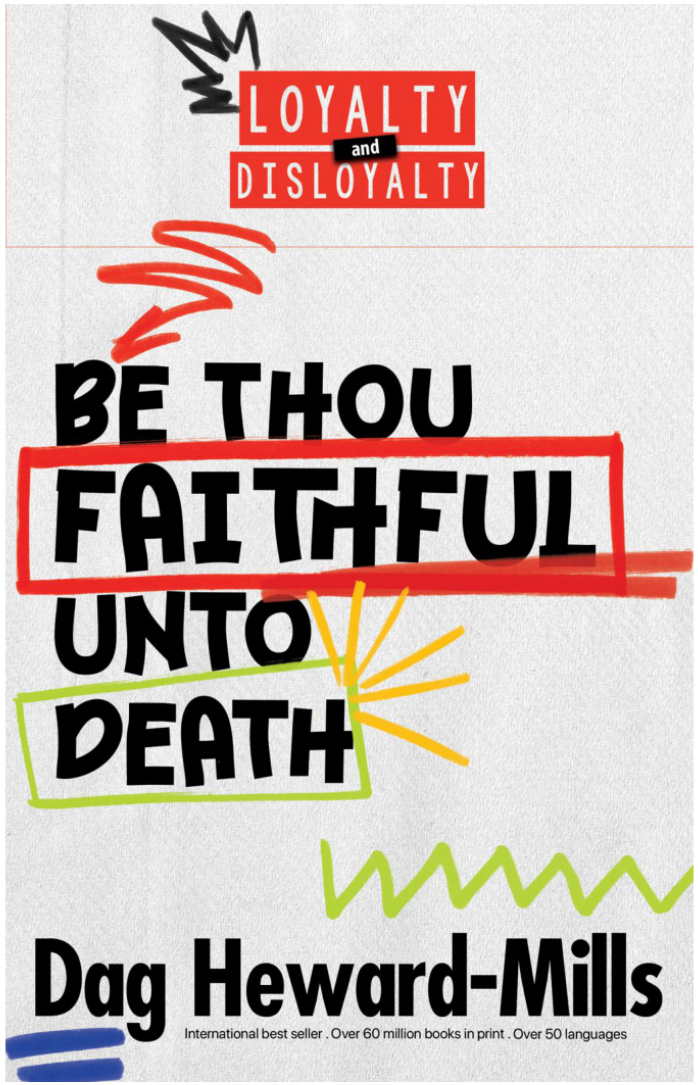
LOYALTY
and
DISLOYALTY
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FAITHFUL
UNTO
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A king who is loyal and true will keep his power. Loyalty will keep his kingdom strong.

Proverbs 20:28 (ERV)

CHAPTER 1

Why "Faithful unto Death"?

Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days: BE THOU FAITHFUL UNTO DEATH, and I will give thee a crown of life.

Revelation 2:10

According to the dictionary, "faithful" means loyal, constant, the same, unwavering and unchanging. To be faithful unto death, therefore is to be loyal, constant, the same, unwavering and unchanging until death.

1. "Be thou Faithful Unto Death" is a command from Jesus Christ.

> Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days: BE THOU FAITHFUL UNTO DEATH, and I will give thee a crown of life.
>
> Revelation 2: 10

Jesus does not believe in short term commitments. He expects faithfulness unto death! Those are the standards of your saviour and it is important that you believe in them and practice them.

There is a clear message from the Lord - be faithful unto death and you will get a crown of life! The crown of life is a promise and a reward for those who are able to be faithful to death.

Although it was a message to the church in Smyrna it is a message to all; *be faithful unto death!* In life, many people are able to stay faithful only for a period of time.

2. "Be thou Faithful Unto Death" is how to be a family.

> But he answered and said unto him that told him, Who is my mother? and who are my brethren? And he stretched forth his hand toward his disciples, and said, Behold my mother and my brethren! For whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother.
>
> Matthew 12: 48-50

Do not think it strange that I am writing about faithfulness unto death in the ministry. When Jesus walked the earth, He taught us the value of having a second family. He said, His family are those who obey the word of God. He showed us that those who obey the word of God were His brothers, sisters, and mothers. In other words, Jesus made these people his family.

Some people criticize churches that have loyal and faithful members. They do not understand how the church has become a family. In other words, they do not understand why the followers of the church are faithful unto death. They say things like, "This church is a cult. No one can leave that church." The truth is that no one leaves a family. It is difficult to leave your family and it is difficult to leave a church that has become a family. When the leadership builds the church as a family, it is truly difficult to leave.

Faithfulness unto death is a natural occurrence for families. No one leaves a family until they die. No one leaves a church until they die, when the church is like a family. Faithfulness unto death is loyalty and faithfulness to the very end of your life.

3. "Be thou Faithful Unto Death" is the covenant of marriage.

> For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh.
>
> Ephesians 5: 31

Faithfulness unto death is the expectation of every married couple. Marriage is a covenant unto death. It is the coming together of two people to become one flesh. When you separate from your spouse, you are wrenching your flesh out of your spouse's flesh.

All marriages are based on the concept of faithfulness unto death. All couples vow to be faithful unto death. Those famous words, "Until death us do part" are the promises we make to be faithful unto death. Are you not disappointed when a couple breaks up their marriage before death parts them? Marriage is a covenant that we enter into with a mind that, "I will be faithful unto death." Many spouses are faithful to each other for a period of time. Sometimes, their season of faithfulness is short and sometimes it is long. When a spouse is faithful for his entire life then he is faithful unto death.

4. "Be thou Faithful Unto Death" is the command of ministry.

> Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen.
>
> Matthew 28: 20

Jesus was expecting to be with his disciples to the end of the world. Jesus was not expecting Peter and James to work in the ministry for only five years. Jesus said we will be together till the end of the world. It is important that you understand the concept of faithfulness unto death in ministry. To the end of the world!

Faithfulness unto death is the only kind of commitment that is needed for the ministry. If you want to build a mega church, you must have a mind to be faithful unto death. Faithfulness that is not unto death is not the faithfulness you need. You need something that will last till the end of the world.

Do not deceive yourself or anyone else. You do want faithfulness unto death! You want a pastor who will be faithful to you until his death!

You do want a church that will be faithful to you unto death! You do want a friend that will be faithful to you unto death! You do want a wife that will be faithful to you unto death! You do want a husband that will be faithful to you unto death. You do want a God that will be faithful to you unto death!

Faithfulness unto death must be your goal! The reason why we have many stories about those who leave you, those who forget, those who pretend, those who are proud, those who are ignorant and those who accuse, is because faithfulness unto death was not their goal when they chose to walk on in the ministry. Ministry is a long walk! We have all heard of Nelson Mandela's long walk to freedom. But I tell you; there is an even longer walk of faithfulness in ministry.

Be faithful unto death is an instruction from God. You are to take a very long walk of unwavering fidelity to your God, to His purpose and to your calling. You must decide to be faithful to the last day of your life on this earth. Imagine that! How long will you live? Will you die in your forties, fifties, sixties, seventies or eighties? You are expected to be faithful and unchanging until you get into your forties, fifties, sixties, seventies or eighties.

CHAPTER 2

A Faithful Man Who Can Find?

Most men will proclaim every one his own goodness: but a faithful man who can find?

Proverbs 20:6

Why Are People Faithful for Short Periods?

Most people are faithful to something for short periods and seasons of their life. Human beings find it difficult to stay faithful for long periods. Rarely do you find someone who is faithful to one thing for his entire life. The scripture asks a very pertinent question: Who can find a faithful man? Before marriage people make all sorts of promises. Experienced people look on and smile to themselves, knowing that very few of those promises will be kept. Experienced people look on and know that the people who are making the promises will find it very difficult to keep them. Experienced people know that there are very few people who are really faithful.

Most men will proclaim every one his own goodness: but A FAITHFUL MAN WHO CAN FIND?

Proverbs 20:6

God knows that there are few people who are faithful men. God knows that there are few people who will be faithful unto death! Being faithful unto death is only possible if you are a faithful man. You will be one of the faithful men! You must become one of the faithful men!

To be faithful unto death is to maintain faithfulness and loyalty all the way to the end of the race.

To be faithful unto death is to run well till you die.

Be faithful unto death means be the same until you die.

Be faithful unto death means be constant and unwavering until you die.

Be faithful unto death means be loyal until you die.

Be faithful unto death means be unchanging until you die.

Indeed, if you find a faithful person, how long will his faithfulness last?

To be faithful is to be loyal, constant, obedient and never changing. Many people smile today but do not continue smiling tomorrow.

1. Be Faithful in school and after school

Being faithful unto death means being loyal and dependable when you are young and also faithful when you are older. A younger person is always happier, freer, more innocent, more joyful and more excited about everything. A young person is also easily impressionable. All the

disciples of Jesus were young men. Jesus Himself was a young man. Jesus was faithful unto death. Judas was not faithful unto death. Some people cannot be faithful for even three years.

Being faithful unto death means being faithful and loyal whilst in the university and until your last day on earth. There are many people who forsake the God of their youth.

One day, I was shocked to find out that a die-hard politician who had no smell of Christianity on him had been the prayer secretary of the Christian Fellowship when he was in the University.

Actually, I have encountered a number of prayer secretaries who were active during their university days but abandoned active Christian service when they began to work. All prayer secretaries should take note. Satan targets you for the zealous prayers that you offered up when you were in school.

Being faithful unto death means being constant and unwavering all through your youthful years before you are married and after, until the day you fall down and die. Plan to be faithful unto death! Thank God for your faithfulness before you get married. God wants far more from you than faithfulness before marriage. God wants faithfulness, loyalty, unflinching and unwavering commitment before you are married and unto death.

2. Be Faithful before and after marriage

Being faithful unto death means being loyal and unchanging before and after marriage, all the way into your grave. One day, I interacted with a man who was lamenting about the poor performance of a manager of a legal firm. He said that he belonged to a board that had mistakenly employed a lady who was unstable. He described how this lady was unstable because she was unmarried. Being unmarried had affected her performance and stability.

Sometimes marriage stabilizes a person and at other times it causes instability. Will you be faithful after you are married? Will you be the same all the way through marriage and unto death?

3. Be Faithful before and after having children

Be faithful unto death means that you must be faithful even after you have children. There are jobs that require you to be married with children. Children cause a lot of instability and bring changes to our lives. Will you be constant after you have children?

4. Be Faithful before and after your mid-life

Being faithful unto death means you can be faithful until you are in your forties. Many people experience a mid-life crisis when they are in their forties. Midlife crisis usually occurs between the ages of thirty-seven to fifty-five and peaks in the mid-forties. When people are in their mid-life crisis, they do strange things. During a mid-life crisis, a person may quit a job impulsively, spend a lot of money or even divorce their spouse. People in their mid-life crisis are often depressed.

Many pastors re-assess their lives during this period. They analyse whether they have been successful and whether they have achieved anything with their lives. Pastors in mid-life crises tend to jump out of the things they have been faithful to for many years and end their season of faithfulness.

If a person does not have moderation and wisdom, he may end his career abruptly and harm

himself. Many unstable pastors jump out of their ministries during this period. I have watched as dear sons of mine turned into monsters during their mid-life crises.

This is the reason why the Bible teaches us to be faithful unto death. If you have this scripture firmly embedded into your heart, you will be forewarned when you enter that season of life. You will remember that it is important to be faithful unto death. The words, "Be faithful unto death" are not my words. They are the words of Jesus that He spoke unto the Church. What He says to one church, He says to all!

5. Be Faithful before and after you retire

Be faithful unto death means you that you must be faithful after you are sixty years old. What is the point of being a faithful and loyal person when you are young only to change dramatically when you enter your fifties and sixties? Do you know how much you can achieve for God when you are fifty years old?

My mother told me that people in their fifties can experience the best years of their lives. She said, "When you hit fifty, it's like a light comes on!" Indeed, when this light comes on, you must grow up and bear much fruit.

Being faithful unto death means that you are faithful before you retire and after you retire. By the power of God, you will cross the age of seventy with ease! You must be faithful until you are seventy and beyond!

6. Be Faithful through all the changing scenes of life

Be faithful unto death means that you must be faithful through all the different changing scenes of life until you finally die. Indeed, there are many changing scenes of life. There is faithfulness in the season of marriage. There is also faithfulness in the season after your spouse passes away.

7. Be faithful to God and to the church

Be faithful unto death means that you must be loyal to God and to the church even if you have not achieved some of your life's goals.

Do not allow a fear of humiliation among your more successful colleagues to drive you to become a disloyal monster. Some people have metamorphosed into spiritual Absaloms and Lucifers just because they felt they had not achieved as much as some others. If God has called you to the ministry, it is your faithfulness to Him that matters. Achieving great things in the eyes of men is not success per se. Having a good reputation and giving a good impression of yourself is not success per se. Jesus did not have a good reputation in this world. He was executed on a Roman cross. Most people in Jerusalem were under the impression that Jesus Christ was a common criminal.

8. Be Faithful before you are appointed and after you are appointed

Jesus said, "One of you is a devil" (John 6:70). He was referring to Judas Iscariot. Why did He call Judas Iscariot a devil? Because Judas was not faithful unto death! Judas must have initially been a good person because he was appointed to be in charge of the money.

As time passed, Judas was not able to maintain his initial goodness. Judas could not even be

faithful for more than three years. Judas' faithfulness lasted only three years, after which he tried a surprise move against his master. Judas thought he was giving Jesus a surprise by arriving at the Garden of Gethsemane with a troop of enemies.

What a disgusting person! You cannot surprise God! As someone said, "There is nothing worse than a traitor." Indeed, it is sad when people are not faithful unto death but are faithful for a very short while.

CHAPTER 3

What It Means to be Faithful Unto Death

Who then is a faithful and wise servant...?

Matthew 24:45

1. Be faithful unto death: Be a good ambassador until you die.

A wicked messenger falleth into mischief: but A FAITHFUL AMBASSADOR is health.

Proverbs 13:17

You must be a faithful ambassador until death. Faithfulness is important if you want to be an ambassador. When you are an ambassador, you are sent away from the headquarters and expected to represent the organization properly. You are expected to give a good account of yourself and to exemplify all the principles and standards of the one who sent you on a mission. Most ambassadors begin to take on the character of the place they have been sent to, rather than imparting the character of the one who sent them. For instance, pastors are influenced more by the world they have been sent into. Pastors often become worldly rather than influencing the world with the godliness and spirituality of heaven.

As the cold of snow in the time of harvest, so is A FAITHFUL MESSENGER to them that send him: for he refresheth the soul of his masters.

Proverbs 25:13

Indeed, you must be a faithful messenger for the Lord. Do not forget the word of God by which you were commissioned. Go into the world and preach the gospel. Stay with the gospel. Do not preach from the books of first and second "Imaginations"!

Preach from John 3:16! Preach the Word! Preach about Jesus Christ! Be faithful to the message of the cross of Jesus Christ and Him crucified.

2. Be faithful unto death: Do not bother to proclaim your own goodness.

Most men will proclaim every one his own goodness: but a faithful man who can find?

Proverbs 20:6

Most people talk about their own goodness. They never speak truthfully about their own shortcomings and failings.

I once heard someone accusing me of spoiling his life. He claimed that he had suffered when he worked in the ministry. He claimed that he had had marital problems when he worked in the ministry. He claimed that I was a false prophet.

He claimed that I had so much power over his life that he was overwhelmed with the power that I had. He claimed that he had great difficulty in finding a job after he left our ministry. He claimed that his church would not grow because of my teachings. In other words, I had virtually destroyed his life. I was saddened to read about his difficulties but intrigued to notice that he

never mentioned that he was a thief and had stolen many things and been found out. I was also surprised that he did not mention how thousands of dollars evaporated under his watch. But this is the nature of man. Most people will proclaim their own goodness.

People do not mention anything negative about themselves. The scripture is quite clear that the faithful man does not bother to talk about his goodness and to proclaim that he is anything. Do not bother to proclaim your own goodness! Trust in God! The truth will always prevail! Be faithful unto death.

3. Be faithful unto death: You will abound with blessings until you die.

> **A FAITHFUL MAN SHALL ABOUND WITH BLESSINGS: but he that maketh haste to be rich shall not be innocent.**
>
> **Proverbs 28:20**

A faithful man will abound with blessings until he dies. Faithfulness is the reason for great promotion and great rewards. Through faithfulness you will eventually prosper. Rash, impatient men miss out on the blessings of faithfulness.

Many people become unfaithful and disloyal just before their big reward arrives. When I look back on my life and ministry, I realize that I did not reap or receive much reward for anything for a long time.

As the years passed, however, I seemed to benefit more from faithfulness. Why do I say I was benefitting from faithfulness? Because I was not doing anything new and I was not doing anything differently. It was the same preaching on the same topics that were yielding better results.

The difference was that I had been faithfully saying the same things for many more years. The faithful man will abound with blessings. The Bible does not say a knowledgeable man will abound with blessings. The Bible did not say an intelligent man would abound with blessings. It is a faithful man who will abound with blessings.

4. Be faithful unto death: Maintain your qualifications for ministry until death.

> **Moreover it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful.**
>
> **1 Corinthians 4:2**

A faithful man will qualify for ministry. You must remain qualified for ministry until your death. When you are fifty, sixty or seventy you must still be qualified for real ministry. It is required in stewards that a man be found faithful. Be faithful unto death is God's command to you today. Maintain your qualifications.

Solomon started out in holiness and obedience to God. But he did not maintain his qualifications for the throne. When he was older, he loved many strange women and followed idols, unlike his father.

> For it came to pass, WHEN SOLOMON WAS OLD, that his wives turned away his heart after other gods: and his heart was not perfect with the LORD his God, as was the heart of David his father. FOR SOLOMON WENT AFTER ASHTORETH the goddess of the Zidonians, and after Milcom the abomination of the Ammonites. And Solomon did evil in the sight of the LORD, and went not fully after the LORD, as did David his father. THEN

DID SOLOMON BUILD AN HIGH PLACE FOR CHEMOSH, THE ABOMINATION OF MOAB, in the hill that is before Jerusalem, and for Molech, the abomination of the children of Ammon. And likewise did he for all his strange wives, which burnt incense and sacrificed unto their gods. And the LORD was angry with Solomon, because his heart was turned from the LORD God of Israel, which had appeared unto him twice

1 Kings 11:4-9

Solomon fulfilled the requirements for ministry when he was young. But he was not faithful unto death. Will you be faithful unto death? Many people despise young men and consider them immature, lustful and incapable of holding leadership positions in the church.

There are those who think that you must be above forty or fifty to hold important ecclesiastical positions. However, as you can see from this scripture, it was when Solomon was young that he was faithful to God. It was when he was old that he became unfaithful to God. This is why the concept of being faithful unto death is so important. When a young man serves the Lord, he uses his strength to overcome his lusts and deficiencies in wisdom. It is important that he maintains faithfulness unto God and unto death.

5. Be faithful unto death: Conceal the matter until you die.

A talebearer revealeth secrets: but he that is of a faithful spirit concealeth the matter.

Proverbs 11:13

If you are entrusted with secrets, facts and knowledge that you are expected to keep, you must do so until death. That is what it means to be faithful unto death. Recently, I met a man who worked personally with Kenneth Hagin for a number of years. Kenneth Hagin was a great prophet who had amazing visions of Jesus Christ and served the Lord mightily in his generation.

He told me something about Kenneth Hagin that shocked me. He said that Kenneth Hagin said he was not allowed to speak about ninety-five percent of the things he was told in his visions.

That meant that Kenneth Hagin did not reveal ninety percent of the things that Jesus told him in his visions. I was amazed. I wondered how Kenneth Hagin was able to keep those secrets till he died. Perhaps, that is why we have not had any such visions in our lifetime. If you do not have a faithful spirit, you will reveal important secrets that you are supposed to conceal for your lifetime. It takes faithfulness to conceal secrets. It takes faithfulness to conceal a matter!

I remember a pastor who was entrusted with an important secret. He went around telling people what he knew. In my estimation, the act of leaking confidential information which was entrusted to him, greatly lowered him. This fellow was demoted shortly after it was discovered that he was such an unfaithful person.

6. Be faithful unto death: You will receive a reward for being faithful unto death.

Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days: BE THOU FAITHFUL UNTO DEATH, and I will give thee a crown of life.

Revelation 2:10

Your reward for being faithful unto death will be a crown. A crown is the most precious thing you can ever receive in heaven. Indeed on this earth, few people will ever wear a crown. In England, the Queen is the only person who wears the crown.

If you wear a crown, you are highly exalted, privileged and honoured. God intends to grant you a very special and privileged place in heaven for being faithful. You will be distinguished from other people just because of your faithfulness. You will actually wear a crown in heaven. If wearing a crown is such a big deal on earth, can you imagine what it would be like to wear a crown in heaven?

Your faithfulness will by all means be mentioned on the judgment day. Your faithfulness is being watched and marked every day. In a number of stories that Jesus told, faithfulness was a key condition for receiving rewards.

It means your ability to be faithful and loyal all the way to the end of the race is critical for your reward. Notice that *good and faithful* servants are acknowledged. Also notice that *faithful and wise* stewards are noticed. In both cases, faithfulness is spotted and rewarded. These qualities must be maintained until death.

> His lord said unto him, Well done, GOOD AND FAITHFUL SERVANT; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord.
>
> Matthew 25:23

> And the Lord said, WHO THEN IS THAT FAITHFUL AND WISE STEWARD, whom his lord shall make ruler over his household, to give them their portion of meat in due season?
>
> Luke 12:42

7. Be faithful unto death: Give your unwavering support to help another man until you die.

> **And if ye have not been FAITHFUL IN THAT WHICH IS ANOTHER MAN'S, who shall give you that which is your own?**
>
> **Luke 16:12**

There are those who think they must never work for someone. They say, "Why should I work under someone? Why should I be under someone?" Sometimes it is better to be the leg of an elephant than the head of an ant. There are many times that working for someone is far better than working for yourself.

It takes a lot of skill to lead yourself! If you do not have the skill to lead yourself, guide yourself, invest in yourself and fight for yourself, you will not be good at working on your own. God humbles us by causing us to need other people. In the end you will discover that you cannot be perfect without the brethren.

> God having provided some better thing for us, that THEY WITHOUT US SHOULD NOT BE MADE PERFECT.
>
> Hebrews 11:40

8. Be faithful unto death: Be a constant and personal worker unto death.

> For this cause have I sent unto you TIMOTHEUS, who is my beloved son, and FAITHFUL in the Lord, who shall bring you into remembrance of my ways which be in Christ, as I teach every where in every church.
>
> 1 Corinthians 4:17

All my state shall TYCHICUS declare unto you, who is a beloved brother, and a FAITHFUL minister and fellowservant in the Lord:

Colossians 4:7

With ONESIMUS, a FAITHFUL and beloved brother, who is one of you. They shall make known unto you all things which are done here.

Colossians 4:9

Paul had several people who worked for him. In his letters, you get to know his personal workers. People like Timotheus, Tychicus and Onesimus were mentioned as his personal workers and helpers. In each mention of them, he never forgot to say that they were faithful people. It is the one characteristic that you need in a personal worker. Be faithful unto death is to run well as a personal worker until you die.

Be faithful unto death and be a good personal assistant until you die.

Be faithful unto death and be constant and unwavering in your love, devotion and service until you die.

Be faithful unto death and be very loyal until you lie down on the bed to die and disappear from this world. Make sure you never change until you go out of this world.

9. Be faithful unto death: Stay constant and qualify for a role in the next level of ministry.

Faithfulness is always a factor in choosing people. When you have to choose somebody, you must always look at the person's faithfulness. God looked at Paul and considered that he would be a faithful person. That is why he chose Paul. He did not choose Paul because he was clean and sinless. Obviously, Paul was not clean. He was a blasphemer. He was a murderer. He was an opposer of the ministry. But he was faithful!

And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who hath enabled me, for that HE COUNTED ME FAITHFUL, PUTTING ME INTO THE MINISTRY;

1 Timothy 1:12

Just as God chose people to work in the ministry because of their faithfulness, Apostle Paul directed that those to be chosen for the next level of ministry should be faithful people. You must respect this quality of faithfulness just as God respects this quality of faithfulness. Paul was quick to look for faithfulness in others.

And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, THE SAME COMMIT THOU TO FAITHFUL MEN, who shall be able to teach others also.

2 Timothy 2:2

10. Be faithful unto death: Do not tell lies until you die.

A faithful witness will not lie: but a false witness will utter lies.

Proverbs 14:5

A faithful person does not tell lies. The presence of lies reveals the beginning of unfaithfulness. Many Christians do not realize how serious it is to tell a lie. All forms of falsehood, deception, pretence, hiding, misleading comments, incomplete stories are deceptions and indications of unfaithfulness. Are you a faithful man? You are a faithful man when you do

not tell lies.

The moment you tell a lie, you reveal that you are not a faithful person!

CHAPTER 4

The Evil Stick: Skandalon

Ye did run well; who did hinder you that ye should not obey the truth?

Galatians 5:7

Many people run a race and get to a place where they suddenly fall and crash to the ground. This is what you have to prevent! Make sure you do not fall to the ground and crash out of the race. You will make it to the very end! You can be faithful unto death!

I have some difficult news for you. There are some evil sticks called *Skandalon* that have been put out to trip you up. These little sticks, *Skandalon*, are wicked tricks of the enemy that destroy people who have a great future. Jesus predicted this and was worried for the people in this world who would experience *Skandalon*.

Woe unto the world because of OFFENCES (*SKANDALON*)! for it must needs be that offences come; but woe to that man by whom the offence cometh!

Matthew 18:7

"*Skandalon*" is a Greek word that refers to a snare or a trap stick. A *Skandalon* will disturb you and make you trip, fall and crash in the middle of your race. *Skandalon* is the stumbling block that topples you in the middle of your race to victory.

As you continue in your service to the Lord, you will surely come across the occasion to stumble, to fall and to be unfaithful. A *Skandalon* will disturb you, upset you, unsettle you and confuse you.

Jesus said that *Skandalon* must come. In other words, there is no way to escape from *Skandalon*. There will by all means be the occasion to fall, the occasion to stumble, the occasion to trip and the occasion to crash to the floor in the midst of your race to the finish line.

Skandalon is the reason why people who are faithful today are not faithful tomorrow.

It is important to be aware of what is going to happen to you. There are going to be great opportunities to completely deviate from your set course.

God's plan for you is for you to be faithful unto death in such a way that you will get a crown at the end of this life.

Skandalon is also translated as "offence". Offence is the reason why many people's faithfulness is not unto death. Offence is something that is predicted by Jesus. Every single person is going to experience *Skandalon*.

Satan will attempt to put an impediment in your way which will cause you to trip and fall and to abandon your course.

Satan has sent out scouts whose aim is to cause you to distrust and desert someone you need to

trust.

Satan sends out scouts to see if there are any openings and opportunities to trip some-one.

There will be opportunities for you to become one of those who accuse endlessly with false accusations and slander.

There will be opportunities for you to become one of those who leave the church with bitterness and cursing.

There will be opportunities for you to become one of those who are proud and arrogant.

I recently saw one of my sons in ministry threatening people with strong words. He had grown in pride, that is how come he could speak such "great" words.

There will be opportunities to become a dangerous son who can turn around and blaspheme.

You must watch out for different types of *Skandalon* that will try to topple you, trip you up and make you crash to the ground in the middle of your race. Just as Paul said, "Ye did run well; who did hinder you that ye should not obey the truth?" (Galatians 5:7)

Who Is Prone to "*Skandalon*"?

The *Skandalon* is the magical power that brings you crashing down and out. *Skandalon* works on those who have the tendency to fall down. You must be prone to falling before a trap stick or a stumbling block will bring you down. *Skandalon* is the trap stick and the stumbling block that will remove you from the race.

Satan is looking for those who are prone to falling and tripping. Not everyone is prone to fall in the same way. Some people are overweight and unstable and therefore easily stumble and fall. Some people are so skinny and light that they easily topple over. Also, people run in such a way that they easily fall. Some people wear shoes that make them trip more easily. Some people wear dresses that get caught in the ground and it makes them unstable. Some people wear gowns that get caught under their feet and can cause them to trip. Some people are old and unstable. Indeed, older people fall more easily. Many older people die from falling down.

It is these tendencies to trip and to fall that demonic scouts are seeking to find in you. When demonic powers find that you have certain characteristics they are more sure that their *Skandalon* trap stick will be successful in bringing you down.

In Rick Joyner's *Final Quest*, he states that, [1]"Scouts and smaller companies of demons with such names as rejection, bitterness, impatience, unforgiveness and lust were sent in advance of this army to prepare for the main attack. These smaller companies and scouts were much fewer in number but they were no less powerful than some of the larger divisions of evil spirits."[1]

[1-1] **The Final Quest** by Rick Joyner, Nashville, Tennessee: Thomas Nelson Incorporated, 2001; Extract from Chapter 1: ***"The Hordes of Hell Are Marching"***

Remember what Paul said, I have finished the race! I have finished my course!" Paul did not crash out of his race and make nonsense of all that he had done in the past. None of the *Skandalon*, stumbling blocks or trap sticks that were placed before Paul as he ran his race were able to topple him and make him go out of the race.

Who are those in ministry who are prone to falling away easily? Who are the ones who are being identified as best targets for the deployment of *Skandalon*?

Satan's main aim is to push you out of your race of ministry.

1. People who have a close relationship with an offender can fall out of the race easily.

An offender is someone who is into various forms of sin and evil. His life and practices offend the Holy Spirit. He practices malice and wickedness.

You cannot be faithful unto death if you are closely connected to people who practice malice and wickedness.

I once met someone who was determined and committed to serve the Lord. However, she became friends with an "offender." Through this offender, her ministry was completely derailed and destroyed. Your friends and associations will definitely have an effect on your ability to be faithful and loyal unto death.

Once you are happy in the company of an evil person, his evil ideas and wicked thoughts will pass like a leaven into your life. In the Bible, malice and wickedness are described as leaven. Malice and wickedness are things that spread.

> **Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with THE LEAVEN OF MALICE AND WICKEDNESS; but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.**
>
> **1 Corinthians 5:8**

I once encountered someone who loved me but made friends with someone who hated me. With time, the hatred of the person who hated me seeped into the life of the person who loved me. As the years went by, the person who loved me became as hateful, wicked and ungrateful as the one who hated me.

Look at your linkages. Look at your connections. Look at your deep friendships. Look at your boyfriends and look at your girlfriends. They are people who take you away from your calling and prevent you from being loyal and faithful to the end.

Anyone who has malicious and evil friends is a candidate for *Skandalon*. It is going to be difficult for someone who has a close relationship with an offender to be faithful unto death. You will soon trip and fall very low because of your bad friendships.

> **But whoso shall offend one of these little ones which believe in me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea. Woe unto the world because of offences (*Skandalon*)! For it must needs be that offences come; but woe to that man by whom the offence cometh!**
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> **Matthew 18:6-7**

As you can see from this scripture, offence, *Skandalon*, comes through somebody. That is why he says WOE TO HIM THROUGH WHOM OFFENCES COME. If you have a friend who is a dangerous person, you will be infected with his evil. There are people who will connect you to immorality. They will sin with you or they will cause you to sin.

There are men who are disloyal and they will infect you with their evil way of speaking. By associating with and befriending disloyal people, you will be affected and infected with the evil of

disloyalty, unfaithfulness and treachery. You will not be able to be faithful unto death because of your evil associations and friendships.

That is why it is important to find the right marriage partner. I remember a sister who desperately wanted to be close to me in the ministry. She had been in the church since she was a baby. All that she wanted to do was to serve the Lord with me.

When she finished university, she met and married an erratic personality. As she was entering into this relationship, I thought to myself, "I hope my daughter will be able to continue serving the Lord as she desires." But it was not to be so. Within two years of her marriage, she was sitting in front of me with her husband informing me that they were leaving the church. I marvelled as I watched this young lady who was so desirous to serve in the ministry being taken away by this erratic man.

2. People who are prone to unforgiveness can fall out of the race.

> **To whom ye forgive any thing, I forgive also: for if I forgave any thing, to whom I forgave it, for your sakes forgave I it in the person of Christ; LEST SATAN SHOULD GET AN ADVANTAGE OF US: for we are not ignorant of his devices.**
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> **2 Corinthians 2:10-11**

Do you really want to be faithful unto death? Do you want to be loyal to the very end or do you want to join the list of those who could not make it to the very end?

Anyone who has a pattern of unforgiveness will definitely be a target for the devil. A person who is prone to unforgiveness is someone who has, over the years, shown a pattern of not forgiving people.

I cannot see an unforgiving person surviving the race for faithfulness to the end. There is no way you will even reach the end of your marriage with your pattern of unforgiveness.

Most people who struggle with unforgiveness claim that they have forgiven everyone. Usually, it is not so! Unforgiving people disconnect from relationships because they bear many grudges against many people.

A person who maintains relationships over many years is someone who practices forgiveness. Anyone who is prone to unforgiveness opens the door to satan and makes himself easy prey for the *Skandalon* stick. The evil *Skandalon* stick of unforgiveness is what will make you trip, fall and crash out of the race.

Watch out for those who continually break friendships and relationships. You must fight to keep all important friendships and relationships. That is the sign that you are a forgiving and loving person. As you see from the scripture in 2 Corinthians 2:10-11, satan gains the upper hand in anyone who does not forgive.

3. People who are prone to bitterness can fall out of the race.

> **Looking diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby many be defiled;**
>
> **Hebrews 12:15**

Bitterness is perhaps the greatest condition that prevents a person from being faithful unto

death. An analysis of rebellious and fallen pastors reveals a consistent strain of bitterness and unforgiveness in them.

Bitterness is a convoluted, complicated and deep-seated version of unforgiveness. Bitterness is the spiteful, malevolent, malicious and vengeful version of unforgiveness. A person who is deeply rooted in unforgiveness becomes bitter. Bitterness is something that troubles and defiles many people.

I have watched many pastors become hurt and bitter after they were corrected. I remember different occasions where pastors were rebuked and never recovered from their hurt and offence. Because they were types of people that did not let go of issues, a simple correction became the door through which satan destroyed them.

I remember a lady who was dismissed from her job and grew in bitterness until she became a traitor walking in the footsteps of Judas himself. Imagine a female Judas!

I remember an ignorant young man who had never worked in the secular world before. He had no idea about the rules of employment. When he was asked to follow the rules of employment, he became so upset that he launched himself into a bitter fight against me. His response of bitterness and hatred was so unusual that satan took advantage of him and destroyed him.

I remember a pastor, who was transferred from his city to another place, who became so bitter that he sought to destroy me with all his strength and might.

Be careful that you never walk in convoluted, vengeful, implacable, rancorous unforgiveness and hatred. Bitterness will destroy you! Bitterness will destroy many people!

4. People who are prone to pride and arrogance can fall out of the race.

Pride goeth before destruction, and an haughty spirit before a fall.

Proverbs 16:18

Pride was the first sin of the universe. Lucifer fell because of his arrogance and pride towards God. He lifted himself up against Almighty God Himself. He was marked out for destruction and punishment because of his pride. Those who are prone to falling out, follow this exact same pattern of pride and stubbornness.

People who are proud are marked out for destruction. Some people are more prone to pride than others. When people get a little older, they are stiffer and more rigid in their responses and behaviour. Stiffness and rigidity are found in people who are proudly unbending in any matter.

Young people are more flowing and easily impressionable. You cannot impress or convince an older person as easily as you would a young person.

I have watched a number of pastors grow up from university into their mid-life when they began to attack me and insult me. When they were younger, I laid hands on them and appointed them as pastors. Then I ordained and consecrated some of them to the ministry. When they were younger, they were humble and appreciative of the honour bestowed on them. As they grew older, they were filled with arrogance and pride. They became easy targets for the *Skandalon* stick and crashed out of the ministry.

5. People who are prone to envy and jealousy will not finish their race.

> Now at that feast he released unto them one prisoner, whomsoever they desired. And there was one named Barabbas, which lay bound with them that had made insurrection with him, who had committed murder in the insurrection. And the multitude crying aloud began to desire him to do as he had ever done unto them. But Pilate answered them, saying, Will ye that I release unto you the King of the Jews? FOR HE KNEW THAT THE CHIEF PRIESTS HAD DELIVERED HIM FOR ENVY. But the chief priests moved the people, that he should rather release Barabbas unto them.
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> Mark 15:6-11

People who are filled with envy cannot be faithful to the end. The jealousy and envy that they have will cause them to stumble and crash out of the race. Satan is looking for those who are harbouring these terrible traits.

Envious people are the next candidates for the evil trap stick that brings them crashing down to the ground.

Spite and resentment at seeing the success of another is what is called envy. When a person harbours resentment towards another person's success, he is harbouring a dangerous evil called jealousy.

Although it is not apparent, an envious person can harm and kill you if he gets the chance. Fortunately, most envious and jealous people do not get the opportunities they wish for. They earnestly hope for the downfall of the person they envy.

Unfortunately, envious people are often near or close to the person they are envious of. They often have to express admiration and praise for someone that they actually resent. Envious people are often forced to express grudging admiration. They wished things would not work as well as they did.

I once discovered the secret envious ill intents of a fellow minister. He had hoped for my downfall for many years and had expressed his secret desires for my destruction on several occasions. Unfortunately for him, the person to whom he expressed his wicked expectations and hopes told me all about it. It gives you goose bumps when you think of how much people want your downfall.

It is a dangerous thing to be near someone who wishes you evil but is forced to admire you grudgingly.

People want what you have! It is painful to them to see you enjoying advantages, privileges with success after success. Most of the time envious people do not have the opportunity to directly strike at you but if they had the opportunity, they would.

Envy and jealousy are terrible evil traits and characteristics. Do not be found harbouring these evil snakes. The scripture says, "Wrath is cruel, and anger is outrageous; but who is able to stand before envy?" (Proverbs 27:4)

When Jesus was on earth, He was murdered by pastors. The Pharisees did what you would expect murderers and armed robbers to do. They killed the Holy One of God. They murdered a man who had only done good in His lifetime. Jesus had preached, taught, healed, delivered and blessed the multitudes endlessly. The response of the people to the good works of Jesus was to kill Him like an animal.

Indeed, a great evil had transpired because these men had allowed jealousy and envy to grow in them.

6. People who are filled with the love of money are prone to falling and crashing out of the race of ministry.

> **For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.**
>
> **1 Timothy 6:10**

Those who love money and are very conscious of money will eventually fall to the evil that destroys many. You will discover that some pastors are serving God only because of financial benefits. It is important to root out all forms of covetousness from your heart. Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks about money all the time.

> O generation of vipers, how can ye, being evil, speak good things? for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh.
>
> Matthew 12:34

There was a pastor who told me that he had received the gift of writing books. I was excited to hear of this gift. When he finally released his first book, it was all about money and about becoming rich. One day, I had the privilege of watching a video of him preaching in a church and I noticed again that his preaching centred around finances and money.

Eventually, this brother was transferred to another region. The bishop who was supposed to receive him under his council objected to having this pastor within his domain because he felt the pastor was too conscious of money and made too many financial demands on the church system.

Eventually, when this brother had the opportunity to be a travelling preacher, he ministered mostly about money and riches. Eventually, this fellow got into various conflicts with various churches, making outrageous claims for money which he had not earned nor deserved. Indeed, it was as though he was wearing a t-shirt on which was written, “I love money, the root of all evil.”

Money consciousness is an evil thing. You must not be money conscious in your relationships. You must not be money conscious at work! Making financial demands and having very high expectations of financial rewards can be offensive to your employer.

One day, a brother went up to his employer and said, “I think I have worked very hard this year.” He presented figures and facts and explained to his boss why he should receive a certain amount of money as a Christmas bonus. The boss was silent and immediately began to make arrangements to lay off this fellow. The brother was surprised that his apparently innocent request for a well-deserved Christmas bonus caused him to be laid off; but the boss was offended by his request for a bonus.

I think it is offensive to God when you make certain claims. The truth is we do not deserve anything. Make sure you take away the scent of the love for money from your ministry. It is repugnant to God and to man that you are filled with the love of money.

Money is not the root of all evil. The love, the liking and the desire for money is the root of all evil. Check your heart’s desires, dreams and visions. Check your casual conversations and make sure they are not filled with expressions of desire for more and more money.

I once had the privilege of reading a letter that a pastor wrote to his friend. In the letter, he shared his dream of becoming a millionaire. There were no dreams of catching an anointing. There were no visions of dreams of building the church. There were no visions and dreams of winning souls and having crusades. It was all about making millions of dollars and becoming rich. These pastors were filled with covetousness and the root of all evil.

Are you Elisha or Gehazi?

What are you? Are you an Elisha or a Gehazi? Elisha is the example of a person who desired the anointing. Gehazi is an example of someone who desired money.

Elisha wanted two portions of the anointing!

Gehazi, on the other hand, wanted two portions of clothing and provisions. Gehazi was a man of covetousness. He was a wicked, covetous servant of the Lord and his ministry ended up on a rubbish heap. The love of money is the root of your not being able to make it to the end. If you want to be faithful to the end, you must set aside the love of money.

> And Naaman said, Be content, take two talents. And he urged him, and bound two talents of silver in two bags, with two changes of garments, and laid them upon two of his servants; and they bare them before him.
>
> 2 Kings 5:23

7. People who are impatient will fall out of the race.

> **Be patient therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord. Behold, the husband-man waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he receive the early and latter rain.**
>
> **James 5:7**

Today, there is a lot of talk about the Faith Movement. Faith is so important in serving God. Without faith you cannot achieve anything and you cannot accomplish much for God. Without faith there would be no miracles, there would be no preaching and there would be no power.

> That ye be not slothful, but followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises.
>
> Hebrews 6:12

Remember that faith works with patience and through patience. Faith without patience will not achieve much.

Impatient people will never live to see the great things that God has for them. As you mature in God, He will give you the grace to develop patience.

Every minister must learn to suppress his restlessness in life and ministry. Every minister must learn to suppress annoyance when confronted with delay.

God is doing great things and He will surely bring to pass all His promises in your life.

Conclusion

Be faithful unto death! Close the door to satan! Protect yourself from anything that will remove you from this great ministry. Faithfulness is a good thing! Loyalty is a good thing! Be

faithful unto death and you will receive the crown of life.

To the making of many books there is no end!